

Message Text

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64

ACTION EB-11

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 ISO-00 PM-07 NSC-10 SPC-03 SS-15 RSC-01

L-03 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 PA-03 USIA-15

PRS-01 CAB-09 COME-00 FAA-00 DRC-01 /100 W

----- 076224

R 111437Z OCT 73

FM AMEMBASSY LAGOS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1385

INFO AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG 115

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ETRN, NI

SUBJECT: CIVAIR: LAGOS AS POINT OF TRANSIT TO SOUTH AFRICA

1. OCTOBER 10 DAILY TIMES REPORTS THAT GENERAL GOWON WAS QUESTIONED BY REPORTER AT IKEJA AIRPORT PREVIOUS DAY ON USE OF AIRPORT BY FOREIGN AIRCRAFT AS TRANSIT POINT TO RACIST TERRITORIES IN SOUTHERN AFRICA. ACCORDING TO TIMES, GOWON REPLIED BY DENYING SUCH USE. ALL THAT FMG HAS SO FAR DONE, GOWON IS QUOTED AS SAYING, HAS BEEN TO "PERMIT FOREIGN AIRCRAFT TO TRAVEL THROUGH NIGERIA TO NEXT PORT OF CALL, BUT DEFINITELY NOT TO SOUTH AFRICA."

2. FMG PRESS RELEASE ON AIRPORT INTERVIEW MAKES NO REFERENCE TO QUESTION-AND-ANSWER ON AIRCRAFT TRANSIT TO SOUTH AFRICA, NOR DID ANY OTHER PAPERS CARRY THIS REPORTED EXCHANGE.

3. COMMENT: REPORTER'S QUESTION OBVIOUSLY A LOADED ONE, REFERRING IMPLICITY TO ITINERARIES OF PANAM (LAGOS TO KINSHASA TO JOHANNESBURG) AND KLM (KANO TO KINSHASA TO JOHANNESBURG). GOWON'S RESPONSE WOULD INDICATE HE AWARE

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OF ISSUE AND HAS NO WISH TO INFLATE IT, JUDGEMENT REINFORCED

BY ABSENCE OF Q-AND-A FROM FMG OFFICIALS RELEASE.

4. AS FAR AS PANAM CONCERNED, FMG HAS GIVEN NO INDICATION OF RENEWED SENSITIVITY THIS ISSUE. NEW LAGOS PANAM REP PETER LEGRO REPORTS THAT MATTER WAS IN NO WAY BROACHED DURING HIS INITIAL ROUND OF MEETINGS WITH NIGERIAN CIVIL UNION OFFICIALS. HE POINTS OUT THAT AGREEMENT BETWEEN PANAM AND FMG, WHICH HE SAYS LARGELY WRITTEN BY FMG, PERMITS PANAM FLIGHTS FROM LAGOS TO KINSHASA AND "ONWARD DESTINATIONS". THIS PHRASING HAS BEEN CONSIDERED BY ALL AS ACCEPTABLE MEANS OF SKIRTING SOUTH AFRICAN PROBLEM. NONETHELESS LEGRO IS REPORTING TIMES PRESS ITEM TO HOME OFFICE.
REINHARDT

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Message Attributes

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